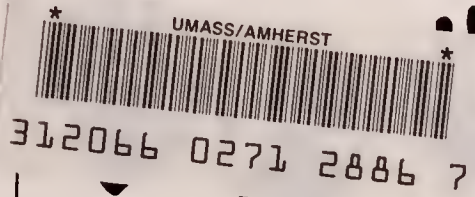


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MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL-LINKED SERVICES

Community Partnerships for Educational Success

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"Education has become too complex and challenging to rely entirely on schools. We need the home; we need businesses; we need community involvement. We cannot effectively educate children without parental and community involvement."

**Arthur R. Swanson, Principal, Kennedy Elementary School
Medford, Massachusetts**

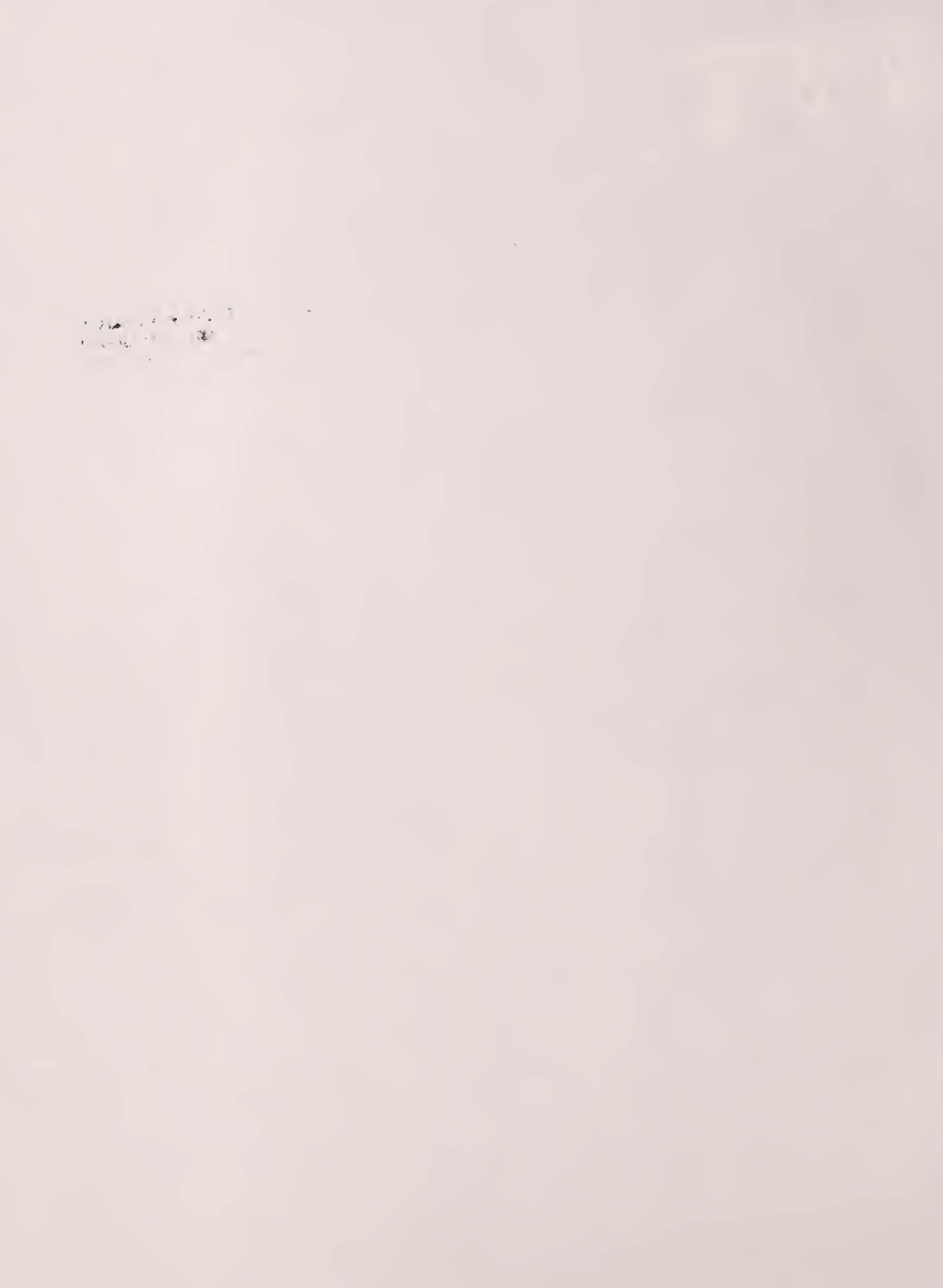
"I now have better communication with my children. We talk more freely about responsibility and homework, and they feel more comfortable expressing their concerns to me because they know I am taking an active role in their education."

Parent from Orange, MA

"Schools should be a place where parents can feel free to come and get the help they need to be better parents, and become full partners in the enterprise of educating their children."

Dr. Susan Roosevelt Weld





School-Linked Services Goals:

- 1) Ensure that all children come to school each day ready to learn**
- 2) Improve the well-being of families to better support their children's education**
- 3) Improve coordination, collaboration and resource sharing at and among our state and local agencies**









What is School-Linked Services?

Experience tells us that parents, school officials, agency staff and other local leaders know their community best. The School-Linked Services initiative embraces this principle and supports community leaders' efforts to foster an environment where children feel safe and nurtured, and come to school each day ready to learn. This belief is also echoed in the The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 which acknowledges the importance of family involvement and promotion of overall child well-being as critical aspects of a quality education. School-Linked Services addresses these goals by:

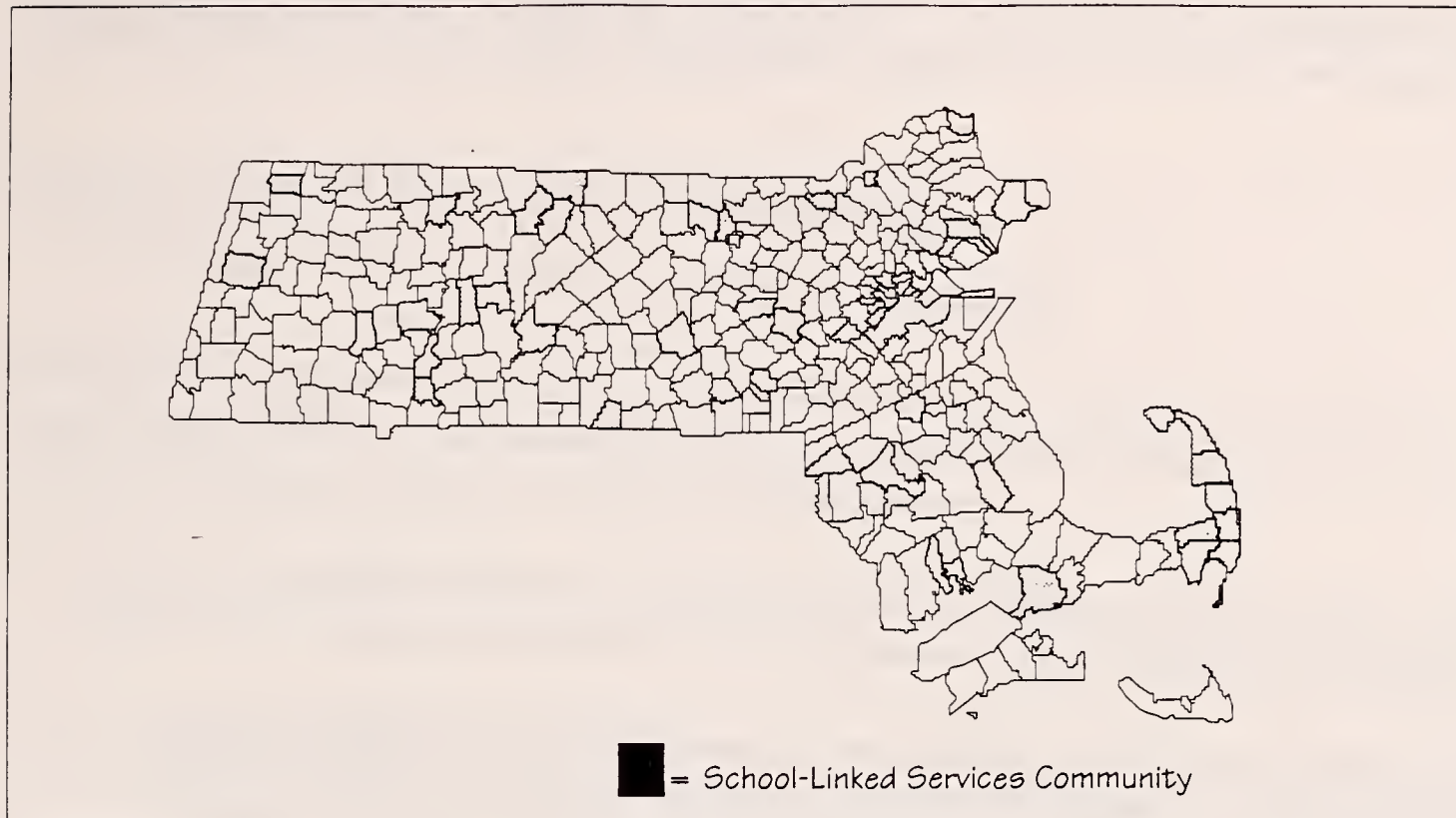
- 1) Ensuring that all children come to school each day ready to learn;
- 2) Improving the well-being of families to better support their children's education; and
- 3) Improving coordination, collaboration and resource sharing at and among our state and local service agencies.

Through a dynamic, locally designed and owned process, communities use the following collaborative framework to achieve these goals:






-  Identification of a Local Partnership made up of parents, school staff, community agencies, business and other leaders of the community to set priorities, leverage resources and oversee the project;
-  Development of a Community Action Plan that:
 -  Identifies and prioritizes needs of school children and their families;
 -  Identifies existing services and resources in the community; and
 -  Develops and implements effective, sustainable strategies for meeting the needs of children and families.
-  Identification of a Project Coordinator to follow-up on collaborative ideas of Local Partnership members, reach out to parents, and coordinate resources.

The School-Linked Services movement is growing within communities and across the Commonwealth. Communities are eager to learn new ways to work together to support children and families. Significant evidence demonstrates that involvement of families and communities is as important to children's education as what goes on in the classroom. Piloted in 13 communities in 1994-95, School-Linked Services has expanded to 47 urban and rural communities in fiscal year 1996 throughout Massachusetts. This year, 115 elementary and middle schools work together with parents, agencies, organizations and businesses in their community to create new ways of strengthening families and supporting children. Sixteen state agencies also bring their child-centered and family focused resources and assistance to support community collaborative efforts.

Where Is School-Linked Services?



Characteristics of School-Linked Services Communities

-  47 Communities Implementing School-Linked Services
-  115 Elementary and Middle Schools Enrolling 53,771 Students
-  244 Community Agencies and Businesses Collaborating With Schools*
-  43% Percent of Students Considered Economically Disadvantaged
-  Student Ethnic Breakdown
 - 69 % White
 - 13 % Hispanic
 - 10 % African American
 - 7 % Asian
 - 1 % Other

*At the beginning of the school year




How Does School-Linked Services Work in Communities?




Many health, developmental, and social risks confront today's children. Providing an environment that promotes learning and positive development requires more than good teaching. It also means:




School-Linked Services Communities

Increase Family Support for Education

Parental/family involvement is critical to children's educational success—thirty years of research has shown that regardless of socio-economic status or parents' educational attainment, family involvement improves students' learning and development.

-  More than two-thirds of School-Linked Services pilot sites provide GED and ESL classes to improve parents' basic skills and help them be more supportive of their children's education.
 -  *Pittsfield identified and recruited parents in need of GED and ESL classes, provided space in their elementary school and worked with their community Adult Basic Education agency to leverage the necessary resources to operate the program.*
 -  *The McKay and Guild schools in East Boston offer ESL classes to their interested parents, and offering family literacy field trips for parents studying English and their children.*


-  Over half of the School-Linked Services communities have opened or are planning to open school-based Parent/Family Resource Centers in their schools that will assist with improving parenting skills.
 -  *Worcester provides basic math training for parents in their Granite Street School center so they may better assist their children on math homework.*
 -  *Framingham's McCarthy Elementary School is developing a center where parents run baby-sitting co-ops, support groups, and provide childcare while parents take classes in the school's computer lab.*


-  School-Linked Services communities have developed a rich array of parent outreach, involvement and skills training activities.
 -  *In Taunton, of the parents who received leadership training, one parent successfully ran for the School Committee and two others are co-chairs of the School-Linked Services Local Partnership.*
 -  *In Lawrence, because of extensive outreach and the provision of child care and translation, the Oliver School Improvement Council regularly has over 30 parents attending meetings.*


School-Linked Services Communities


Respond to Changing Family Demographics


Economic, social, and political forces have created tremendous shifts in the characteristics of families and created new challenges for children's development.


 To address children and family needs for supervision and to enhance social and educational opportunities, many communities have created afterschool programs.


 *In Lynn, afterschool, evening and Saturday programs have been designed to reinforce reading, language arts, and math skills with project based learning activities provided by business volunteers, teachers and community agency staff.*


 *In Holyoke, afterschool programs staffed by teachers and college student volunteers, assisted students with computer skills, math and science, arts, and crafts activities.*

 Local Partnerships linked with other community resources to assist families in meeting basic needs including housing, food and clothing.

 *In New Bedford, employees from Polaroid Corporation assisted with a clothing and book drive and also provide family literacy services to all families at the school.*

 *In Salisbury, linkage has been made with agencies in town and in nearby towns to assist families with accessing WIC, food stamps, and food pantries.*

 *In West Springfield, the Open Pantry, a Local Partnership member, provides food, clothing, advocacy and referral on housing for families in need.*

 Communities have organized social activities and events to bring children and families together. Parents at the Tobin School in Boston organize and host monthly Family Exchange nights at the school which are attended by over 300 families in the community.

Gloucester has set up reading nights at the schools where parents bring in desserts and books and read to their children and receive information on other ways to support their children's education.

"School-Linked Services has enabled our district to support families and children in a variety of collaborative activities with other community agencies. The benefits to us are more actively involved parents/guardians, children better able to relate to school, and a better informed citizenry."


**Penny Kleinhans, Superintendent
Athol-Royalston**



School-Linked Services Communities


Address Health and Social Problems


Many Massachusetts children come to school with serious health, emotional or behavioral problems which impair their ability to learn. These children, and their parents, need additional help and support, often straining school resources.


 Communities have developed strategies to protect and improve the health status of children and families.


The Quincy School in Boston links with South Cove Community Health Center to provide health services for students during the day including physicals, dental services, health education and staff support.


In Orange, licensed dental hygienists visited the schools to do check-ups and make referrals for children's parents.


 Communities have linked prevention programs including safety promotion, violence prevention, and alcohol and substance abuse prevention into a comprehensive framework addressing the needs of children and families.

 *In North Adams, conflict resolution programs and activities are established and provided to school staff, parents and students.*

 *Southbridge has offered parents and students bilingual programs in violence prevention and communication skills to prevent substance abuse.*

 To promote the emotional well-being of children and families, communities are developing and linking mental health services, support groups, self-esteem activities, and referral systems.

 *In Malden, bilingual counseling for students and families is being provided to address a very strong identified need.*

 *In Orange, afterschool programs include special sessions for youth dealing with divorce or violence in their homes.*

School-Linked Services' Local Partnerships respond to these challenges with strategies for involving families as partners in their children's education; developing supportive services for children and families; and building collaboration among state and local education and human service agencies to use community resources more effectively.

How is School-Linked Services Supported?

At the local level, School-Linked Services is successful because communities come together, identify priorities, develop strategies to help children and families and leverage a variety of local, state, and federal resources. Many of the programs and activities have relied on volunteers, in-kind donations and support from local organizations such as churches and businesses.

State support is important too. School-Linked Services is administered by the Executive Office of Education in collaboration with a State Executive Steering Committee representing 16 state agencies working with community-based programs for children and families. The state shares in the responsibility for supporting community collaborative efforts by providing:

- 🔔 **Three year start-up grants** in decreasing amounts each year starting at a maximum of \$30,000 down to \$15,000 in year three. Each year, this venture capital revolving fund mechanism allows new communities to begin, while mature communities maintain their programs through collaboration and use of state and local funds to sustain project coordination.
- 🔔 **Comprehensive technical assistance** on a regional basis which emphasizes Local Partnership development, Project Coordinator training, Community Action Plan development, parent outreach/involvement strategies, evaluation methods, use of information and communications technology, and sharing of ideas and best practices across communities.
- 🔔 **Independent evaluation** that examines the effectiveness of particular program elements and assists communities overall improvement process.

| Types of Funding | Examples |
|--|--|
| Local Funding | city block grants, grants and/or programs offered by local schools |
| State Funding | grants obtained from the Massachusetts Departments of Education, Mental Health, Social Services, Public Health, Transitional Assistance, Massachusetts Arts Council and state colleges and universities |
| Federal Funding | grants and programming offered by Cooperative Extension Services (e.g. 4-H Programs) |
| Private Foundation Support and support by local grant making organizations | Kellogg Foundation, United Way, YMCA and YWCA |
| Corporate Support | grants and donations of equipment, personnel, and supplies made to communities by companies like NYNEX, Brigham & Women's Hospital, Boston Gas, and Lawrence Memorial Hospital, as well as by small local businesses within School-Linked Services communities |
| Private Donations | contributions by parents, teachers and community residents |

School-Linked Services Works

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 affirms the importance of family involvement and promotion of overall child well-being as critical aspects of a quality education. Through beginning and end of year surveys, monthly reports, frequent technical assistance meetings, mid-year reviews for Local Partnership members, significant evidence shows the success of School-Linked Services around its three goals.



Ensure that all children come to school each day ready to learn

In the pilot year with 13 sites, more than 2,000 elementary students benefited from the myriad of afterschool and health related programs, services and activities developed by Local Partnerships.

In the second year, activities have increased dramatically. In November of 1995, totals from 26 of the 47 sites showed just in that month, over 7,800 students took part in recreational and academic enrichment programs, performed community service projects, and received a variety of health services, among other activities developed to meet the needs of children.

Improve the well-being of families to better support their children's education

During the pilot year, more than 2,500 parents and families benefited from a wide range of programs and services developed to enhance their skills and better support their children's education.

In November of 1995, totals from 26 of the 47 sites showed that over 9,500 parents participated in family support activities including workshops on issues identified by parents, support groups and counseling, educational programs such as ESL and GED.

64% of parents participating in the pilot initiative said they became more involved in their children's education simply by being members of the School-Linked Services Local Partnerships.

Improve coordination, collaboration and resource sharing at and among our state and local service agencies

All School-Linked Services communities developed a working Local Partnership with parental participation that created a comprehensive Community Action Plan and oversaw its implementation.

At the start of this year, nearly 250 agencies and businesses were involved in the Local Partnerships, identifying, sharing and coordinating new and existing resources to meet the priorities of families.

State agencies have established regional Interagency Technical Assistance teams becoming more efficient and effective in their support of community collaborative efforts.

The School-Linked Services State Executive Steering Committee is providing information and trainings to the community Project Coordinators on the implementation and effects of major state initiatives including managed health care, welfare reform and education reform.

According to their Community Action Plans, School-Linked Service communities are leveraging on average at least \$2.00 for every dollar they receive for their start-up grant

Assessing the Long Term Impact of School-Linked Services

School-Linked Services will focus its **long-term** evaluation on the following indicators to further track its effectiveness on improving the lives of children and families:

- ✎ students' ability to learn and succeed academically;
- ✎ school safety and violence prevention;
- ✎ neighborhood stability and movement of students in and out of schools;
- ✎ attendance and related indicators such as suspensions and expulsions,
- ✎ increases in availability and scope of after-school programming, and
- ✎ ability of sites to leverage resources to support programs developed by Local Partnerships.



"We have noticed an increase in our student attendance, especially with our Latino children, since developing linkages with the community to better support families."

Brad Weaver, Principal

Hayden McFadden Elementary School, New Bedford

What is the Future of School-Linked Services?

“There is so much hidden need in Lunenburg – we are concerned with finding ways to reach out to children and families who would otherwise fall through the cracks, who may be missing out on opportunities or not receiving the help that they need for daily living. The School-Linked Services program will help us coordinate our efforts to reach these families and children. We are glad to have a vehicle for making this happen - a tool which can help us do together some things to help children that we know we wouldn't be able to do on our own.”

**Rev. Stanley Lanier, Pastor, United Parish Church,
Lunenburg**

School-Linked Services is a program that is owned, developed and directed by community leaders who see the importance and the vision of collaboration as a means to improve the lives of children and families. With almost two years of implementation and lessons learned, Massachusetts communities are realizing the benefits of this framework for helping children overcome barriers to educational success. As an integral part of Massachusetts Education Reform, School-Linked Services will continue to join parents, agency staff, and other community leaders with school officials to ensure children come to school each day ready to learn.

As Local Partnerships gain more experience and credibility in their communities, they become more effective in tapping parents', school staff and other state and community partners' creativity, energy and commitment. This leads to greater leveraging and linking of new and existing resources to better meet the needs of children and their families. Staff from local and regional state agencies are also learning from School-Linked Services communities and are making great strides toward improving their responsiveness to the needs of community partnerships on behalf of children and families.

The experience gained within existing School-Linked Services sites has value to other communities. Through networking, mentoring, and technical assistance, the lessons learned can be widely shared. This exchange of information, ideas, and problem solving becomes even more valuable as new communities are added each year into this growing network. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts seeks to continue support of the infrastructure, capacity and expansion of local efforts that demonstrate community leadership, vision and collaboration that result in the strengthening of their children and families.



Massachusetts School-Linked Services

Community Partnerships for Educational Success

Supported by:

Governor William F. Weld
Lieutenant Governor A. Paul Cellucci
Secretary Michael J. Sentance, Executive Office of Education



In collaboration with:

| | |
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| The Department of Education | The Department of Transitional Assistance |
| The Executive Office of Health and Human Services | The Department of Public Health |
| The Executive Office of Communities and Development | The Department of Social Services |
| The Executive Office of Administration and Finance | The Department of Mental Retardation |
| The Executive Office of Elder Affairs | The Department of Youth Services |
| The Executive Office of Public Safety | The Division of Medical Assistance |
| The Department of Mental Health | The Office For Children |
| The Department of Public Health | The Children's Trust Fund |

School-Linked Services Communities are:

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Allston-Brighton | Lowell | Roxbury (United in Spirit) |
| Amherst-Pelham | Lower/Outer Cape | Salem |
| Arlington | Lunenburg | Salisbury |
| Athol-Royalston | Lynn | Shirly |
| Attleboro | Malden | Southbridge |
| Brockton | Marlborough | Taunton |
| Brookline | Medford | Ware |
| Carver | Milford | Watertown |
| Chinatown (Quincy School) | Mission Hill (Tobin School) | West Springfield |
| East Boston Excels | Needham | Worcester |
| Falmouth | New Bedford | Worcester (Beacon Brightly) |
| Framingham | North Adams | Worcester (Friendly House) |
| Gloucester | Northampton | |
| Greenfield | Northbridge | |
| Holyoke | Orange | |
| Huntington | Pittsfield | |
| Lawrence | Revere | |
| Lawrence Charter | | |

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